

GUIDED BUYING DECISION SUPPORT  
IN AN ELECTRONIC MARKETPLACE ENVIRONMENT

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A system (10) for providing guided buying decision support within an electronic marketplace environment includes a server (42) that interacts with buyers (12) to receive procurement parameters for items. An option generator (50) receives  
5 procurement parameters for a particular item needed by a particular buyer (12), determines one or more acceptable item-supplier combinations consistent with the procurement parameters for the item, and generates one or more recommended options for communication to the buyer (12), each recommended option specifying a service through which it is possible to procure the item consistent with the  
10 procurement parameters. The server (42) further interacts with the buyer (12) to receive a selection of a particular recommended option. A manager application (46) automatically initiates the service specified in the selected recommended option in an attempt to procure the item consistent with the procurement parameters.